

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed March 26, 2004. Claim 22 has been amended. Claims 23 and 24 have been added. Therefore, claims 22-24 are currently pending. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the original claims and other claims in this and other applications. Reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested in light of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph for being indefinite. Specifically, the Office Action contends that the claim terms “said first and second frames” did not have proper antecedent bases. Claim 22 has been amended to obviate the rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore requested.

Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,993,373 to Nonaka et al. (“Nonaka”). The rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

The present invention relates to an irradiation room for particle beam therapy that comprises an anti-corotation unit having a first rotational element with an uneven portion which meshes with a first uneven portion formed on a first ring member. A second rotational element having an uneven portion meshes with a second uneven portion formed on the second ring member. A shaft member couples the first and second rotational elements together and is attached to a rotating gantry such that the shaft member is free to rotate on its axis.

The present invention can provide several advantages over the prior art. As explained in the Specification, the present invention allows the positions of the first and second ring members to be maintained even if the rotating gantry rotates. Accordingly, the invention provides for “the flexible moving floor to form a substantially level access floor regardless of the position of the irradiation unit emitting particle beams.” See p. 4, at 7-18.

Nonaka teaches a medical particle irradiation apparatus having a rotating gantry carrying an irradiation unit. Nonaka does not teach or suggest all of the claim limitations recited by claim 22. Specifically, Nonaka does not teach or suggest “ a shaft member which couples said first and second rotational elements together, wherein said shaft member is attached to said rotating gantry such that said shaft member is free to rotate on its axis.” For at least these reasons, claim 22, as amended, should be allowable over the prior art of record.

New claims 23 and 24 depend from claim 22 and contain all of the limitations recited by claim 22. For at least the reasons stated above for the allowability of claim 22, and for the unique combination of elements recited therein, claims 23 and 24 are allowable.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

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Respectfully submitted,

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